



Equipes Notre-Dame

On the Road to Fatima 2018

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The apostolic spirit that dwelt in Father Caffarel very quickly led him to work to promote the Teams' Movement throughout the world. In a letter addressed to Pedro and Nancy Moncau, the Brazilian couple who were key to the establishment of Teams in their country, Father Caffarel announced, *"One of my primary preoccupations is to establish relationships with all those who, in the four corners of the world, work to the same end."* These remarks are the very sign of his interest in an openness to the world and all things international. Therefore, quite rapidly he decided to organise great gatherings to allow team members from different countries and continents to get together to pray, exchange and give ever more dynamism to our Movement. Already in 1959, he associated these gatherings with true pilgrimages, because for him, *"The Christian is a walker, a man on a journey, a pilgrim. He reaches for a goal, "the celestial Jerusalem"...and it is the vigour of his momentum towards this goal that ensures its religious value."*

For Father Caffarel, the idea of setting out with other Team members in order to give thanks and celebrate God enabled one *"to become aware once again of one's vocation, of God's call, to discover that one is in the process of establishing and renewing in one's soul the impetus of the reply to the divine call, to set out."* This tradition was upheld over time and in 2012, the Team members wished, for the first time, to change continent and go to meet our Brazilian brothers and sisters. In 2018, we will set out for Fatima in Portugal, where we have already held a gathering back in July 1994. This gathering will take place from 16 – 21 July 2018.

These dates suggest a far off future and yet, it is really quite close if we want to prepare ourselves spiritually. Now is a good time for us to ask ourselves about our faith and the way in which we live it. Do we really consider Jesus Christ to be the Way, the Truth and the Life in our daily lives? Do we let ourselves be inspired by this truth and do we realise what our responsibility as a Christian in our difficult world is? We ought to ask ourselves all these questions, and we need to reply to them in complete sincerity, in order to make our hearts and spirit more open to the graces that will be conferred at

this gathering. Father Caffarel used to say about this time of preparation that *"efforts were demanded in order to remove relationships and comfort that took up too much space."* For him, going to such a gathering ought to be accompanied by a prerequisite effort of faith. We ought to make these efforts personally, as a couple and in our team, if we want the whole Movement to unite in order to be converted a little bit more each day and to prepare for this privileged encounter with the Lord. This spiritual fraternity would be incomplete if we neglected the notion of material mutual aid so that the greatest number of Team members possible can enjoy this occasion. All those who have already participated in one of these gatherings know the richness, beauty and strength of them and know too that one comes back transformed and revitalised. Therefore mutual aid must be practised between continents, countries, regions, sectors and teams. A true chain of national and international solidarity must gradually see the light of day. Let us invoke the Holy Spirit to stimulate our ingenuity and creativity. As of today, let us start a kitty that we will unfailingly increase at every meeting. But we need to go even further if we wish the Teams to generate even more motivated and committed Team members tomorrow, who will serve and contribute to the establishment of the Kingdom. Father Caffarel was tireless in reminding us of the importance of fraternal mutual aid and for him, it was a question of a true commitment, as much spiritual as material. We are responsible for each other. Our Movement is like a huge mosaic, where each piece, however small it is, has a role and contributes to the beauty of the whole work. We need to rise to a double challenge: that of concentrating all our efforts to prepare ourselves, under the protection of Our Lady of Fatima, for this wonderful encounter with God, as well as that of allowing the greatest number of Team members in the world to attend.

***Let me be a fit instrument in your immaculate and merciful hands
for introducing and increasing your glory to the maximum
in all the many strayed and indifferent souls,
and thus help extend as far as possible the blessed kingdom of the most Sacred
Heart of Jesus.
St Maximilian Kolbe, Immaculate Conception Novena***